Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT WASATCH PEAK ACADEMY February 26, 2008

The attached report contains the results of the first two phases (Self-Assessment Process and On-Site Validation Visit) of the Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS). This Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is conducted by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Special Education Services (SES), as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for students with disabilities through enhanced partnerships between charter school and district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in Wasatch Peak Academy on January 22, 2008, included student record reviews, interviews with school administrators, teachers, and parents. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of parents.

This report contains a more complete description of the process utilized to collect data and to determine strengths, areas out of compliance with the requirements of IDEA, and recommendations for improvement in each of the core IDEA areas.

Areas of Strength

The validation team found the following:

General Supervision

- In August 2006 and March 2007, professional development on the school special education referral processes was provided to the faculty by the special education teacher. Teachers reported in small group interviews that the information was helpful.
- The survey had 100% participation by certified staff and although teachers struggled with some of the questions, the survey itself, in combination with the small group interviews, raised awareness of special education services, rules and regulations.
- The UPIPS committee gave WPA a chance to focus on the special education needs of students, parents, and staff. The committee became very focused on assessing the needs of the school in relationship to all students and specifically special education students. Committee discussions were useful and committee members talked with other faculty about what the committee was doing.
- WPA made AYP for the school year 2006-2007 and student achievement data is used for all students in prescribing appropriate interventions.
- WPA started the listening program in November of 2006 with 12 special education students. Positive results are being reported by the teacher and parents.
- The special education teacher is an experienced teacher and in her 4th year of providing special education services to the children in the state of Utah.
- Parents and teachers felt that ability grouping had some negatives, but overall met the needs of individual students by addressing reading and math at their ability level.
- All necessary information and reports have been submitted to the state.
- A school program was designed to teach the concept of community through service learning which is integrated into the core curriculum. WPA also has a focus on learning Spanish. All students K-6 receive instruction in Spanish language acquisition.
- The Board of Directors at WPA believes strongly that an annual self-improvement plan is essential to improving upon the education program. Each year the Board assesses WPA's performance as it relates to academic performance, the school vision and UPASS, with the self-assessment driving the goals and objectives for each annual improvement plan.
- All steering committee members were involved with gathering information from teachers and parents.
- WPA is addressing the issue of pre-referrals with training for teachers in the process as well as developing a tool box of interventions and strategies for differentiated instruction.
- Child Management Team (CMT) meetings are used to discuss students at risk for academic failure.
- WPA is grateful to have dedicated professionals working in the special education program.

- School staff meets as a team to review evaluation results and determine eligibility for students with disabilities. Eligibility teams include all required team members, as documented during file reviews and staff interviews.
- Eligibility determinations are current and included in special education files.
- Files are maintained in locked file cabinets and contained records of access. School staff are trained in confidentiality procedures during staff meetings.
- Evaluation procedures were followed and classification criteria were met in 100% of files. At the completion of the evaluation, all data are summarized on an Evaluation Summary Report.
- Well trained staff and faculty are willing to work with students to help students succeed.
- All initial evaluations were completed within 45 school days of receiving parent consent.
- Classroom teachers are provided with IEP information for each student with disabilities in their classroom. They are provided with copies of relevant portions of IEPs and can access the complete IEP with the special education teacher.
- For next year, there are plans and money set aside for training for teachers and paraprofessionals in new curriculum.
- Evaluations were generally comprehensive, assessed all areas of concern, and utilized a variety of assessments, both formal and informal.
- The school was a welcoming environment; positive interactions between staff and students were observed.
- School rules are posted throughout the school, including hallways and student bathrooms.
- Child find system includes teacher training and parent notification. Teachers are trained in the referral process and can describe interventions they have used with struggling students.
- Response to Intervention (RTI) process is being implemented using AIMS and DIBELS.
- Forms were in compliance with Utah requirements.
- Professional development in special education is utilized from the Utah Personnel Development Center (UPDC). School staff are surveyed annually by the school administrator to identify professional development needs.
- Paraprofessionals are properly trained and supervised.

Parent Involvement

- Overall, the parents are pleased with the special education services provided at Wasatch Academy.
- Parents like the individualized instruction and the special education staff.
- Parents are highly involved with their children.
- Parents are encouraged to volunteer at school and 85% of the parents do more than 30 hours of volunteer work a year.
- Parent surveys were given to all parents of students receiving special education services. It was
 decided that calls would be made to all parents who had not yet returned the survey and
 questions would be asked over the phone.
- Parents felt Procedural Safeguards were explained clearly.
- Parents had the opportunity to provide input during evaluations, and the evaluation team considered their input.
- IEP meetings were scheduled at agreeable times.
- Parents felt their child's needs were addressed and accommodations and modifications were being implemented.
- Consent for initial evaluation and procedural safeguards were always provided.
- Consent for evaluation is documented prior to conducting the evaluation.
- Parents are provided with written prior notice of proposed activities, including evaluation, eligibility determination, IEP development and implementation, and placement.
- Procedural Safeguards are provided to parents at least annually.
- Parents receive copies of evaluation summary reports, eligibility determinations, and IEPs, as documented during the file reviews.
- Parent input is sought after and documented for IEPs and evaluations in the special education files.
- IEPs document that the IEP team has considered and determined how and when parents will receive reports of student progress on IEP goals.

- Parent involvement is high in Wasatch Peak Academy. Parents volunteer at the school and participate in committees, including the UPIPS Stakeholder Steering Committee and CMT.
- Wasatch Peak Academy is developing a parent training regarding home strategies for literacy.
- Parents are provided with frequent progress reports on IEP goals, evidence of which were included in special education files.
- School staff, when interviewed, were knowledgeable about Procedural Safeguards.
- Consent for initial placement is included in all student files.
- Parents are provided with a notice of meeting prior to meetings to discuss eligibility, IEP development, and placement.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- WPA is a small school with small classes and small group instruction in regular classrooms and special education instruction.
- WPA places students in ability groups for reading and math instruction.
- WPA has regular classroom aides, one per grade, with two classes per grade. The aides help all students, including students with disabilities.
- WPA exceeded the state target for students with disabilities to have time with non-disabled peers.
- Goals were appropriate and IEPs were completed on time.
- The Child Management Team (CMT) is used as the Least Restrictive Behavior Intervention (LRBI) committee.
- Parents reported that general education teachers and the principal attend IEP meetings.
- Current IEPs are present in all student files.
- Initial IEPs were developed within 30 calendar days of Eligibility Determination.
- Full team participation on IEPs was documented.
- Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) statements included current data and how the disability affects the student's involvement in the general curriculum.
- Goals included in IEP were measurable and addressed all areas of student need. Functional goals were also included in IEPs.
- IEPs included a listing of special education and related services, as well as the location and amount of services needed.
- Special factors were considered and documented.
- Special education services begin as soon as possible following the IEP meeting.
- Decisions regarding student placement is made by the IEP team. Placement discussions begin
 at the general education classroom and progress up the continuum as needed. Student
 scheduling needs are considered during placement review.
- Full continuum of placement options is available.
- IEPs are developed collaboratively with all required team members. School staff described ways
 they collaborate to ensure that all services and accommodations are provided.
- IEPs and placement are reviewed at least annually.
- Special education staff are knowledgeable about behavior interventions and requirements under IDEA 2004. Interim alternative education setting (IAES) options are available, in case of need.
- U-PASS data is reviewed by teachers and considered during curriculum/instructional review and IEP development.
- During classroom observations, paraprofessional support, and accommodations such as reading directions aloud and preferential seating was observed.
- Physical education is provided to all students, regardless of disability.

Transitions

Wasatch Peak Academy does not have students of transition age at this time.

Disproportionality

 WPA is a charter school that receives students based on choice through a required lottery system. No restrictions on race, academic achievement, or disabilities are used to enter the lottery.

•	Once children are registered at WPA, if they are a student with disabilities, WPA addresses their
	needs.

- Primary home language was documented in all files.
- Students are evaluated and eligibility determined following USBE Special Education Rules.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

IEP Content: Iowa assessment was not addressed on IEP assessment accommodations page. *These areas represent items where the visiting team could not locate appropriate documentation of requirements of IDEA 2004 and Utah State Special Education Rules in student records or other data sources.